

IS EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT REALLY NECESSARY

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ABSTRACT

This workshop is designed to foster an initiative for intelligent Equipment Management employing the advances in information systems and opportunities uncovered by the re-engineering process. The guiding concept behind the initiative is that both contributions and benefits must be equitable and balanced for all participants.

INTRODUCTION

In the ever changing workplace, there are times all that seemed well planned has gone awry. Backlogs keep building, costs rise while budgets shrink and all forecasts show no signs of improvement. It becomes mandatory to do more than cursory checks to find the crux of the problem.

When examining how to best solve the stated problems you must consider all aspects of the calibration and equipment acquisition cycles. This consists of the following:

1. Types of instruments being calibrated
2. Number of technicians and their skill level
3. Standards in use
4. Interface involved
5. Capital budgets
6. Budget to complete all required tasks
7. What specifications are mandated by programs

Controlling what equipment is on-hand, how it is maintained and proper acquisition practices is paramount in the life cycle of equipment.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

In the process of evaluating the need for Equipment Management the calibration laboratory should be the starting point. This

area is exposed to most of the equipment used in any company. The records kept can assist in important information gathering. Checking a detailed report of the backlog for all equipment, and what is the average turn around time of this equipment are the first steps. High numbers, usually more than 3 percent of the total inventory and a turn around time of greater than 4 days, can be an indicator of too much equipment on the floor and/or not enough technicians.

Next a delinquency report of greater than 2 or 3 percent is a critical area of concern. Equipment must be properly maintained at scheduled intervals to ensure accuracy and a prolonged life cycle. The backlog and delinquency reports can be looked at in conjunction with each other to determine where and how to start checking for equipment.

Equipment that has been moved, misplaced, or lost is also further evidence that some control must be introduced to better maintain the equipment and its usage.

HOW TO START CHECKING

An on-line real-time database is mandatory. This again is usually, but not restricted to, calibration data. At time zero must be set and reports generated over a set time period. Weekly reports over a 3 month period will give you some excellent starting data. The following reports are to be generated:

1. Total number by manufacture and model
2. Calibration backlog by technician
3. Average turn around time by technician
4. Delinquent percentage overall and if possible by type

After all reports are run, for the set time period, they should be collated in a statistical graph format. These graphs are then scrutinized for abnormalities. This will assist in the verification of numbers and types in particular locations. They can also help the calibration laboratory to project what will be required to complete all tasks in a timely manner.

Once these reports are dissected, anti correlation's made by numbers, (high counts in totals, delinquent, or backlog) manual checking should then commence. Each area must be thoroughly examined for what is being used, and what is being held for future use. All areas where equipment is being used must be inspected in this way. Any spares should be noted, and if requirements not justified, be considered excess. It will be necessary to check areas such as closets, desks, and cabinets for items that cannot be located. Equipment can be located in some very strange places and no stone should remain unturned. This information is then balanced with the initial data and reports of findings readied for presentation.

WHO TO CHECK WITH

Three distinct activity spheres must be interviewed and kept informed during all phases of the examination process. The company Controller is the first individual to interview. This person knows budget constraints and the company's future game plan. Knowledge of what each program or project status is will assist in the overall findings and help determine what equipment is really required. Next the Capital acquisition section must be interviewed. Records of what has been ordered and what is being ordered for each program will add to the information already gathered and lend credence to all findings. Finally the Users must be interviewed. Questions should be asked as to what their expectations for the future, why they have the equipment they have, and what they feel is needed to accomplish their jobs more smoothly and efficiently. During these checks each individual must be asked how program specifications are met in conjunction I-I with their job function.

SUMMARY

Once all required data has been accumulated it must be statistically analyzed and placed in a readable format for presentation. The presentation must include the findings of what equipment is currently on record and relationship of usage and non-usage by areas. Then a combined graph showing the owned equipment with that now on order anti budgeted for the future. Next the areas of concern that the equipment users have is presented along with how Equipment Management could delay any fears. The conclusion the findings must show that the inauguration of an Equipment Management function will control acquisition cost, decrease both backlog and delinquencies, assure the user's that equipment will be available on demand, and assist in holding fast to program specification requirements.

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DISCLAIMER

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